Case 3116

Gnomulus Thorell, 1890 (Arachnida, Opiliones): proposed designation of *G. sumatranus* Thorell, 1891 as the type species

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the usage of the generic name *Gnomulus* Thorell, 1890 for an opilionid (family ONCOPODIDAE) by the designation of *G. sumatranus* Thorell, 1891 as the type species. This designation was the author's clear intention and is in accord with the subsequent understanding and usage of the genus. However, *Gnomulus* was described with *G. rostratus* Thorell, 1890 as the type species by monotypy. *Gnomulus sumatranus* and *G. rostratus* are morphologically distinct and it is possible that they will require generic separation in the future. Members of the genus *Gnomulus* are known from the Himalayan Region and from southeast Asia.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Arachnida; Opiliones; ONCOPODIDAE; *Gnomulus*; *Gnomulus sumatranus*; *Gnomulus rostratus*.

1. In 1890 Thorell (p. 378) described the genus *Gnomulus* and designated '*Gnomulus sumatranus*' as the type species. However, he did not then describe this species and the name *sumatranus* was not made available until a year later. Thorell (1890) referred to '*G. sumatranus*' as 'Typus: *G. sumatranus*, Thorell' and in a footnote recorded 'species in opere nondum edito (Opilioni nuovi ...) a me descripta' (species to be described by me in a not yet edited paper). Thorell described and illustrated *G. sumatranus* from Sumatra in 1891 (pp. 759–763, figs. 37–40).

2. Thorell (1890, p. 378) described another species, *Gnomulus rostratus*, at the same time as the genus *Gnomulus* and, as the single included species with an available name, this is the type species by monotypy.

3. Clearly Thorell's intention was to fix *Gnomulus sumatranus* as the type species of *Gnomulus* and this formally invalid designation has been accepted and never questioned by subsequent authors. There are considerable advantages in maintaining *G. sumatranus* as the type of the genus.

4. *Gnomulus sumatranus* is a well known species. The external morphology of the male from the type series was illustrated in the original description (Thorell, 1891, pp. 759–763, pl. 9, figs. 37–40) and later also by Roewer (1923, pp. 61–62, figs. 64a–c); another male and its genitalia were illustrated by Loman (1903, figs. O, V–f, pl. 11,

figs. 19, 21). On the other hand, *Gnomulus rostratus* was described in a lengthy Latin text without illustrations (Thorell, 1890, pp. 378–381) and has remained a virtually unknown species. Although fairly conspicuous and fairly common at the type locality (Penang Island, Malaysia) and nearby localities on the mainland, there has never been a subsequent record of this species in the literature. Further specimens of *G. rostratus*, which were found later, were misidentified in Roewer's collection. *Pelitnus insularis* Roewer, 1927, a species now included in *Gnomulus* and most closely related to *G. rostratus*, was not recognized as such. The penis morphology of *G. rostratus* has not hitherto been studied and published.

5. *Gnomulus sumatranus* Thorell, 1891 was based on a type series of material of both sexes (one male, three females and two juveniles), preserved in the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Genoa. *Gnomulus rostratus* Thorell, 1890 was based on a single female holotype, also preserved in the Genoa collections. We propose (Schwendinger & Martens, in press) to designate the male specimen as the lectotype of *G. sumatranus*. All relevant illustrations (apart from the figure of a leg tarsus of a juvenile) in the original description of the species refer to this specimen (Thorell, 1891, pl. 9, figs. 37–39). It is in perfect condition, with its genitalia intact, and provides the most informative and reliable characters for identification. Female genitalia are uninformative at the species level.

6. The nominal species *Gnomulus sumatranus* and *G. rostratus* are dissimilar in a number of characters. Features of the genitalia of *G. sumatranus* accord well with other species (except *G. rostratus* and *Pelitnus insularis*) described under *Gnomulus* and *Pelitnus* (now in synonymy with *Gnomulus*). However, *G. rostratus* and *G. insularis*, and a further three closely related species which we will describe from Thailand and Malaysia (Schwendinger & Martens, in preparation), are markedly different in external and genital morphology. These may need to be generically separated as more such species become known. The name *Pelitnus* Thorell, 1891 (p. 757, based on *P. armillatus* Thorell, 1891, which has a juvenile type specimen) is available for *G. sumatranus* and its allied species but we (Martens & Schwendinger, 1998, p. 526) have recently placed *Pelitnus* in the synonymy of *Gnomulus* and transferred all 17 known species to the latter genus. Transferring these, and the other species (except *G. rostratus* and *G. insularis*) currently in *Gnomulus*, back into *Pelitnus* and reinstating the latter name, would cause unnecessary confusion and instability. In our view it would be preferable not to change the long accepted understanding of *Gnomulus* but, instead, to establish a new genus for *G. rostratus* and related species if this is required in the future.

7. We propose that *Gnomulus sumatranus* Thorell, 1891 be maintained as the type species of *Gnomulus* Thorell, 1890 in accord with the understanding of the genus since its original publication in 1890. Usage of the generic name is demonstrated in the recent publications by Sørensen (1932, p. 210), Martens (1977, p. 298), Tsurusaki (1990, pp. 59–62), Schwendinger (1992, pp. 177, 197, 198) and Martens & Schwendinger (1998).

8. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to set aside all previous fixations of type species for the nominal genus *Gnomulus* Thorell, 1890 and to designate *Gnomulus sumatranus* Thorell, 1981 as the type species;

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Gnomulus* Thorell, 1890 (gender: masculine), type species by designation under the plenary powers in (1) above *Gnomulus sumatranus* Thorell, 1891;

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *sumatranus* Thorell, 1891, as published in the binomen *Gnomulus sumatranus* (specific name of the type species of *Gnomulus* Thorell, 1890).

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